



Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

"Keep Thy Heart with all Diligence"

The Great Apostasy

LOVE OF APPLAUSE

COLLECTING STAMPS

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

MOSES' DECISION

Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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"The eyes of all look to thee, and thou givest them their food in due season."
—Psalm 145: 15.

"Keep Thy Heart with all Diligence"

LITERALLY speaking, the heart is the mind. Our mind must be kept with all diligence. It cannot be given free rein; we cannot think as we naturally would. We are inclined to be governed by our moods, by our prejudices, by our likes and dislikes for a person or situation. It is not always easy to be strictly honest in our judgment—to judge ourselves and others by merit and by merit alone. Our thoughts must be controlled completely. To do this is a stupendous work; it is something contrary to nature. The Apostle Paul says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Knowledge Necessary

The first step toward a controlled mind is an informed mind. One cannot act upon things he does not know. The words of King Solomon in Proverbs 4 are in keeping with this common-sense approach to the problem. In verses 5 and 7 we are told, "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding."

Hosea 4:6 reveals the risk one takes by not having this knowledge. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." If we reject the knowledge of God, He will reject us just as surely as day follows night and night follows day.

Since a knowledge of God's demands and promises is so essential to our receiving those promises, we should not let a day pass without adding to our store of knowledge. The command is, "Let thine heart retain my words; keep my commandments and live" (Prov. 4:4). "Let thine heart retain my words"—that is the way to keep our hearts with all diligence. That is why we need to study and we need to meditate. But reading alone does not bring results: one verse meditated on, pondered over and lived out is more helpful than ten chapters read over but not remembered or applied. It is not what we skim over, but what we absorb, and then apply, that counts. Do not let a day pass without reading. That was Paul's advice to Timothy: "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:15, 16).

Some Profitable Advice

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1). We might hear these words read on Sunday, but unless we put them into practice during the week they will do us no good. If we are applying that noble principle, then when someone says something cross to us, we will not return cross, ugly words. If we impress that one verse upon our mind in the morning, determine to be governed by it throughout the

day, and then keep our affirmation active hour by hour, we will control ourselves. However exasperating the situation that may arise, our answer will be such as will provoke to love and to good works. Mere reading without application and doing will never bring honor. To have the Bible in the home is a good thing but for that Bible to be of any use, it must be read, and its noble principles translated into acts and deeds and character.

A Worthwhile Promotion

There is much in Proverbs 4 that shows how to keep our heart with all diligence. We read in verse 6, concerning wisdom, "Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee." The wisdom of God contains all the principles that should govern a Christian. It tells us how to act, what to do, and what not to do. It tells us how to dress, how to speak, and even tells us how to think. It is a perfect medium of control.

"Exalt her, and she shall promote thee." We exalt; she promotes. But how do we exalt this wisdom of God? By allowing it to be a ruling factor in our lives. We exalt God by believing and applying His laws to our daily living. This makes us worth more to the brotherhood, more to our families, and more to ourselves. It exalts us, makes us worth much more even for this life, and in the end we shall be exalted to the heights of immortality because that we have exalted God's law now. So it works both ways: if we exalt God, He exalts us. Or to use another proverb, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (Prov. 8:17).

Not only will this wisdom promote us, but it will also bring us to honor. "Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." There are very few crowned heads left in the world today, yet over the ages the wearing of crowns has been highly esteemed. But how vain for a mortal being to want to wear a crown, when any day the short tenure of such kingship or queenship could be terminated by death. On the other hand, when once we obtain the crown of glory which God's wisdom gives we shall get life with it. "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many." That crown will give life unending. Why should we not be anxious to take advantage of such an offer given, not by mortal man, but by an Omnipotent God who controls the boundless universe, One who is able, willing, and determined to fulfill His purpose? It seems we would strive with all our strength and energy to gain it.

One Purpose

We read in Prov. 4:20, 21, "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my saying. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart." That is the way to keep our heart with all diligence, to have one overwhelming interest, and never lose sight of it, whatever may come into our lives. We must have a single eye, must have one chief focal point. Paul was a one-idea man. He said: "this one thing I do," and

if ever we gain the crown of life that is awaiting him we too must have just one overpowering interest. Our heart and interest in God and the things He offers must be kept stable. We cannot expect Him to value our friendship if it is so fickle that we are all taken up and warm with His interests one day and cool and indifferent to Him the next. God wants men and women of character, people who have a fixed purpose and hold to it through thick and thin.

Proverbs 4: 25 is clear on this, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." The prize is at the end of the race, and if we do not look right on, if we do not keep our eye fixed on that prize, we will lack the impetus, the driving force to finish the race.

Avoid Temptation

If we would have our hearts kept with all diligence we cannot enter into the path of the wicked, or go in the way of evil men, as we read in Prov. 4: 14, 15, "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." When the Lord gives you an opportunity to get out of the path of the wicked, do so. Our re-action to this command will reveal whether ours is the torpid, or the diligent heart.

Avoid temptation every time that you can. If circumstances demand our presence in the company of evil people, put up a double guard that you do not learn their ways. You might have to work with people who are careless about their speech, but you do not have to listen to them. You can shut your ears. Every sound that enters the ear need not register on the brain cells. You must be on your watch and guard. "For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence," but we are to eat the bread of sincerity and truth. The diligent Christian will not find pleasure or satisfaction in the company of anyone eating the bread of wickedness. Choose your company, and watch your choice!

If our heart is kept with all diligence our path will be as "a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4: 18). What a blessing to have it getting light about us while the world's picture grows darker and more uncertain. If we avoid the path of the wicked and apply our hearts to knowledge our path will grow brighter and brighter to the perfect day. The light will grow brighter all the time as we absorb and then diffuse God's wisdom.

If avoiding temptation we will not try to see how close we can come to breaking the law of God without actually transgressing. The familiar story of the two carriage drivers holds a valuable moral: We will keep as far from danger as possible rather than see how close we can get without becoming entangled with sin. The wealthy gentleman on his country estate wanted to hire a man to drive his carriage. So he asked two applicants to display their driving dexterity by turning the carriage around on a small precipitous cliff. The first driver drove the carriage so that the wheel rolled perilously close to the edge of the precipice without the carriage going over. The second displayed less skill but showed much more caution. He stayed as far as possible from the precipice. The gentleman hired the latter. So let us apply the lesson to ourselves, and when evil is near—as it invariably is—let us keep as far from it as possible. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." There is no surer index to the diligent heart.

The Diligent Heart Stores Good Treasure

In Matthew 12:35, Jesus was projecting the diligent heart; the heart with the good store, and its opposite, the heart filled with evil treasure. He said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

Every man's heart is a treasury, a collection of good or evil, or a certain percentage of both. As we pass through life we continually encounter new experiences and new situations. From these we receive impressions one way or the other, and one by one these incidents drop into our mental storehouse. Some impress us profoundly and we keep them fresh in memory; others we forget.

The effects of every good deed, every good thought, every good attitude we manifest, is being formed into habit. It becomes a part of the good treasure, or "good store," as Dr. Moffatt renders it. In times of crises or sudden testing, the words we utter, the deed we perform, or the attitude we display, is the result of the good store within. Since we have been in the habit of doing, speaking, thinking good, we continue to do good in critical times. We thus become good by habit, and habit thus works for us. Goodness becomes a part of our make-up, it becomes second nature to do good, to say the right word, to take the proper attitude or to keep the right motive. The heart thus kept with diligence pays big dividends.

In like manner if we habitually do evil, talk evil, think evil, our inner store becomes the evil treasure. As we have accustomed ourselves to wrong doing, so now the evil habit will work against us. When we are put to the test the inner reserve of evil will manifest itself. When we realize how habit can work for or against us, we should be careful about storing our minds with good things.

If we are not diligent in this work and do not lay up a good store, if we are indifferent, or slow of heart to believe and act, the opposition will certainly do its part and our store will be evil. If because of indecision or unbelief we procrastinate to adopt a proper course in life, we are heading for danger. We shall wake up some day and see that we have a course in life, firmly established and settled; our mode of life will be one of doubt, cynicism, bitterness, and the like—the evil treasure. A way of life that is real and practical must be one that we practice joyfully, and the more we practice it the more we will display the good things out of our good treasure, and the more it will encourage us to still better living. Whereas the more evil treasure we lay up, the more it grows and moves us to more evil. It becomes a vicious circle.

We hear much today from modern psychologists about the wonder of the subconscious mind, how that it is the residing place of the driving instincts or urges, and can work beneficially to our advantage. It is reported that 75 per cent of human action is controlled by the unconscious, and 25 per cent by conscious thought. Whatever the proportions, we are dealing with a powerful force in our make-up. It would be well for us if we would harness it to work for our good. But to do this takes diligence.

We ought therefore to conduct ourselves wisely. An act once performed becomes easier to do the second time, whether it be good or bad. Practice makes perfect; not just aimless, indecisive practice, but diligent, constant, persistent practice. Or as an instructor once stated, "Perfect practice makes perfect." Furthermore, whether we

practice good or evil, *practice makes permanent*. We know that practicing a wrong habit will never perfect a good undertaking. Nor will studying fables bring us the knowledge of truth. This is indeed what Paul meant when he spoke of a class of men who were ever learning but never came to the knowledge of the truth.

The Almighty requires that His people be pure inwardly as well as outwardly. Good fruit proceeds from a pure heart. When a man's inner life is corrupted, when his affections are set on earthly things, the actions proceeding from thence certainly will also be corrupt. It is proof of the absence of inward strength. What words can express this thought better than the ones Jesus uttered in His Sermon on the Mount: "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

We may often ask how much a man has done, but the principle from which he acts, the motive that impelled him to act, is rarely considered. We inquire whether he be courageous, rich, skillful, handsome, a good writer, a good singer, or a good laborer; but how poor in spirit he is, how patient, how meek, how spiritual, such are seldom spoken of as things of greater worth. Naturally men respect the outer appearance of men, but God looks on the heart, the inner store.

In the great and final Judgment when the Lord comes to reward His servants, the "hidden things of darkness" will be brought to light, and the "counsels of the heart" will be made manifest (I Cor. 4:5). Knowing as Paul did the seriousness of our calling, we can perceive the reason for his earnest prayers and desires for his brethren, that they might be "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16).

Each man's inner store is a direct result of his choice of wisdom by which he chooses to be governed. There is much learning in the world today, much of it is good in its field, but the wisdom of God greatly exceeds this. There is a great difference between the wisdom of a devout man who is taught by the precepts of God, and the knowledge of a man learned only in temporal affairs. One has a store of heavenly things, the other has but the earthly. The former has a treasure which moths and rust cannot spoil, nor can thieves steal it; the other's possessions are subject to rust, decay, or to be stolen or outmoded by the rapidly changing values of this life.

In view of the blessings the good store will eventually bring us (and truly we enjoy the hundredfold now if we possess it), we ought to be concerned above all else in laying up this good store, thus keeping our heart with all diligence. It should be our supreme ambition, and our constant delight. Our inner store needs strengthening, while it needs also to be emptied of all useless care and anxiety, that we be not drawn away by various desires or of anything, whether insignificant or precious. All things in this world are not vile and mean, but because of higher obligations the Christian may not pause to enjoy them. With us it should be: giving up the good things for the better.

May we have that heavenly wisdom to learn above all things to seek and to find God, to love Him and delight in His service. Such is the diligent Christian whom God will delight to love and bless forever.

Love of Applause

TO BE insensible to public opinion, or to the estimation in which we are held by others, indicates anything rather than a good and generous spirit. It is, indeed, the mark of a low and worthless character; devoid of principle and therefore devoid of shame. A young man is not far from ruin when he can say without blushing, *I don't care what others think of me*.

But to have a proper regard to public opinion, is one thing; to make that opinion our rule of action, is quite another. The one we may cherish consistently with the purest virtue and the most unbending rectitude; the other we cannot adopt without an utter abandonment of principle and disregard of duty.

The young man whose great aim is to please, who makes the opinion and favor of others his rule and motive of action, stands ready to adopt any sentiments, or pursue any course of conduct, however false and criminal, provided only that it be popular.

In every emergency his first question is, What will my companions, what will the world think and say of me, if I adopt this or that course of conduct? Custom, fashion, popular favor: these are the things that fill his entire vision, and decide every question of opinion and duty.

Such a man can never be trusted, for he has no integrity, and no independence of mind to obey the dictates of rectitude. He is at the mercy of every casual impulse and change of popular opinion; and you can no more tell whether he will be right or wrong tomorrow, than you can predict the course of the wind, or what shape the clouds will then assume.

And what is the usual consequence of this weak and foolish regard for the opinions of men? What the end of thus acting in compliance with custom in opposition to one's own conviction of duty? It is to lose the esteem and respect of the very men whom you thus attempt to please. Your defect of principle and hollow-heartedness are easily perceived; and though the persons to whom you thus sacrifice your conscience may affect to commend your complaisance, you may be assured that inwardly they despise you for it.

Young men hardly commit a greater mistake than to think of gaining the esteem of others by yielding to their wishes contrary to their own sense of duty. Such conduct is always morally wrong, and rarely fails to deprive one both of self respect and the respect of others.

It is very common for young men just commencing business to imagine that, if they would advance their secular interests, they must not be very scrupulous in binding themselves down to the strict rules of rectitude. They must conform to custom; and if, in buying and selling, they sometimes say things that are not true, and do things that are not honest, why, their neighbors do the same; and verily there is no getting along without it. There is so much competition and rivalry, that, to be strictly honest, and yet succeed in business, is out of the question.

Now, if it were indeed so, I would say to a young man, Then quit your business. Better dig, and beg too, than to tamper with conscience, sin against God and lose your soul.

(Continued on page 9)

The Great Apostasy

—or Departure from True Religion—

Duration of the Apostasy

THE sacred writers measured the length of the Apostasy at least seven times, each time arriving at the same figure, 1,260 years. This repeated stating of a single fact should surely convince the most skeptical of the accuracy of their measurement. Sometimes the duration of the epoch is said to be 42 months (figuratively speaking); again it is termed 1,260 days; and in other terms, "a time, times, and a half" which equals $3\frac{1}{2}$ "times," or prophetic years.

We shall begin with the 1,260 days of Rev. 11:3 as the least figurative and most understandable approach. During this time the Two Witnesses (previously defined as the Old and New Testaments) were clothed in sack-cloth. As the great falling away from truth was longer than 1,260 literal days, we are forced to use the familiar Bible rule for calculating prophetic time given in Num. 14:33, 34 and Ezek. 4:6, "each day for a year,"* which gives us 1,260 years as the length of time during which the Two Witnesses would be clothed in sackcloth or in a state of mourning because all would be turned from truth to fables.

Revelation 11:2 describes this same length of time as 42 months during which the holy city or people of God should be trodden under foot. As all Bible students know, Bible time for prophetic purposes is reckoned thirty days in a month; thus 42 months would equal 1,260 days (v. 3) or, by applying the aforementioned rule, 1,260 years.

In Rev. 13:5—7 this same 42 months is designated as the period of time when the beast had power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Again in Daniel 7:25 the duration of the Apostasy is measured.

"He [the little horn] shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall

be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time," or "a time, two times, and a half a time" (R.S.V.).

One time is a year or 360 days; therefore $3\frac{1}{2}$ times equals 1,260 days or years (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6) during which the saints of God were worn out or "caused to fail utterly, brought to nothing" (original).

The 12th chapter of Daniel repeats the $3\frac{1}{2}$ times of Daniel 7 with a brighter conclusion. There can be discerned the golden tints of dawn following the darkness.

"Then I Daniel looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one The Man of This on that bank of the stream. And I said Bank of the River to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, 'How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?' The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven; and I heard him swear by him who lives for ever that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time; and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be accomplished" (R.S.V.).

God's river of life which flowed through this epoch suggests the availability of spiritual refreshment for the inner man (Ps. 65:9; 1:1—3; Rev. 22:1), but alas, there was none who thirsted for the water of life. A feeling of desolation sweeps the soul as we gaze back through the centuries to find the river wholly deserted. None but a celestial being, the angel of God, stood upon the waters, keeping silent, solitary vigil and protecting the pure stream from pollution. This symbolism teaches the watchful care and guardianship which God had over His Word (the water of life) during the dark centuries when, as the historian states, the Bible was preserved in the hands of its worst enemies. And why the phenomenon? Because the angel of the Lord stood by, guarding the precious documents as they were tediously copied by the hands of patient monks in their cheerless cells. The original meanings must be strictly preserved, neither addition nor deletion were tolerable, for beyond that era the Lord foresaw that a few faint and famishing souls would betake themselves to the banks of that river, there to receive succor, cleansing, vigor, strength, and at length life everlasting.

The last man to stand upon the furthermost bank of the river when Rome was crushing the saints with ruthless hand, the last man to exalt primitive Christianity in doctrine and practice, was styled by Daniel *a wonder*—and rightly. Can we conceive what moral stamina it required not to bend the knee to Rome in that age when persecution was literally wearing out the saints, when a man's life was worth no more than that of a beast and blood flowed as water if one would not subscribe to the demands of the hierarchy? A wonder indeed was that magnificent Unknown, the last supporter of primitive Christianity!

But Daniel's picture projects a second wonder, one be-

* "Each day for a year." An application of this rule of a year for each day is found in Daniel 9. The Angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel to inform him of the events that should follow in the centuries ahead of him. And according to our common version of the Bible, as well as the R.S.V., Daniel was given the varying periods in units of weeks: 70 weeks, 69 weeks, 62 weeks. Dr. Moffatt translates each of these periods as "weeks of years." Simple analysis proves the foregoing to be true. One of these periods, the 69 weeks, was to reach from the close of the Captivity, and the issuing of the command to "restore and build again Jerusalem," until Messiah the Prince, or Christ.

The command to restore Jerusalem was given by Cyrus the Great in the first year. At that time he had just completed the conquest of Babylon and established the dual Medo-Persian monarchy. Hence the entire tenure of the existence of the Medo-Persian kingdom would be included in the 69 week period; the period of the existence of the Grecian kingdom would also be included. Then by the time that Christ the Messiah came upon the scene, the Roman Empire was at its zenith. The 69 weeks, seven days to a week, aggregate 483 days. It is crystal clear that more than 483 literal days elapsed during this stretch of world history, thus making the year for each day reckoning, or 483 years, the more realistic approach.

longing to the latter days, a man of God on this side of the river who should rise up in the darkness with a determination to know the whole truth and live a life wholly pleasing to God, a man who has arisen, whose life and work are facts of modern history. The foul, muddy streams of theology covered the land to the number of over a thousand faiths, creeds and denominations, all teaching different things, yet all claiming to speak the words of an infallible God, while the Bible which they claimed to respect asserts that all its sayings are Yea and Amen, not Yea and Nay (II Cor. 1:19, 20), and that its followers must be perfectly joined together, all speaking the same things (I Cor. 1:10). A bewildering spectacle! Yet an unfaltering confidence that pure, unadulterated water fresh from the throne of God existed somewhere, and divine instructions to nerve him for the quest, led this noble man, this wonder, to the bank of the river of life. He had read in the Word of God, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. 2:3-5). Taking that Word at face value, he pleaded and sought and searched for knowledge until his efforts were rewarded with success.

Inherent immortality, deathbed repentance, instant salvation, the vicarious atonement, the Trinity, the devil of theology, in fact the entire stronghold of papal tradition was repudiated as false as this man quenched his thirst at the river of life. There at the Word of life he learned too, that more than academic learning, more than "head knowledge," was essential to please God. Christianity was not simply theory for debate but a life to be lived for which the true doctrine provided merely the foundation. And so, building upon the principles of the doctrine of Christ, this man undertook the greatest work of which mortals are capable: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

Only the attainment of this goal—moral perfection combined with doctrinal purity—could identify this man as the latter-day wonder which Daniel beheld in vision. Be his doctrinal beliefs ever so accurate, not until one man had attained perfection of character could the Apostasy be terminated. We maintain that our beloved father and founder, the Rev. L. T. Nichols (1844—1912), is the subject and fulfillment of these prophecies, and that he attained this position during his lifetime—a broad and sweeping statement which we invite everyone to investigate from a doctrinal aspect by means of an exhaustive study of his writings. In the words of the Apostle, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." If there can be found one flaw, one relic of papal tradition, we ask our opponents to bring forth their evidence that they may be justified, or, in the words of the ancient prophet, "Let them hear, and say, It is truth" (Isa. 43:9). To fathom his moral attainment is a work of time. If man can stand at the base of a California Redwood and comprehend its height, then he may know the character of our elder brother. This giant among men may be more clearly recognized, his trials and victories better measured, as we grow into a stature like his.

With the accuracy of divine inspiration Daniel reported the length of time that should intervene between the two wonders: "A time, two times, and a half a time" is specified, which we have found to be 1,260 years.

Again in Rev. 12:14 the duration of the Apostasy is reiterated by another symbol.

"To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

This woman is synonymous with the river of Daniel 12. Both are figures of the Word, for both the river of God and our mother the truth (Gal. 4:26; Luke 7:35) can impart and sustain life. And, as according to Daniel, the angel guarded the water of life during the Apostasy, so according to the Revelator the woman was given eagle's wings or power to flee into the wilderness where she might be protected from the face of the serpent or powers of evil for "a time, and times, and half a time," 1,260 years.

According to the symbolism of Revelation 11 the "beast" was able to kill the Two Witnesses when **Life for the Two Witnesses** they were left without human advocates or support. However, they were not destroyed; in other words, the Holy Book was preserved, as implied in Revelation 11:8, 9.

"Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."

Though God's Word was utterly lifeless in the hands of a willingly ignorant clergy, yet their reverence for the Book was such that they would not suffer it to be put in the grave. It remained before them, a corpse in the streets of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, against the time when, as we read in verse 11,

"After three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them."

A greater miracle was not performed when the widow's son arose from his bier in the streets of Nain, nor was a greater wonder seen by the spectators of that event, than when after 3½ days (better translated "years") or 1,260 years the Spirit of life from God entered into the Two Witnesses and they stood upright in the streets of Sodom. By what means did the Spirit of life from God revive them? Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Unspoken and unexecuted, the Word is lifeless. The Word was partially revived when amid the jargon of conflicting creeds someone gave voice to its clear and reasonable doctrine. Full life and vigor were renewed when that Word was actually translated into flesh (John 1:14) and dwelt among men, when a mortal being converted rules into conduct, creed into character, theory into practice. When the latter-day wonder or man of God stood up to proclaim again the faith once delivered to the saints and to live it out in his daily life, then the Spirit of life from God entered into the Two Witnesses and they stood upon their feet.

Let it be carefully noted that the specified years of darkness did not end when the Two Witnesses were simply revived or when they arose to their knees, or upon the palms of their hands. Not until they stood upright was that dark epoch terminated. The process of their restoration was the work of time, wrought by the travail of a

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Collecting Stamps

STAMP collecting is an interesting hobby enjoyed by many people, young and old, rich and poor, famous and obscure. The late King George V of England possessed a very fine collection of stamps which he had gathered from all parts of the globe.

Besides paying for the delivery of letters, postage stamps sometimes portray important events, national memorials, famous personages. Often a postage stamp will bear the image of one of a country's distinguished statesmen. During the George Washington Bicentennial Year, for instance, the special American stamp bore the image of George Washington, the Father of our country.

Postage stamps also carry with them the authority of a country. They are equal to an official document bearing the authority of the issuing country. Having been issued by its Post Office it must carry the letter to its destination; if not, a national obligation or an international law has been violated, which is a very serious offense.

Likewise, each active Christian bears a stamp; it cannot be otherwise. His totally different life sets him apart from the man of the world. The group of people of which he is a part is aptly described by the Apostle Paul as a "peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2: 14). And upon that stamp of peculiarity is engraved the image of Christ: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did pre-destinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8: 29).

To be of value one of the prime requisites of certain stamps is that they must be properly cancelled. Cancellation is a sign of service, it shows the stamp has been used. Often cancellation doubles and trebles the value of a stamp. If as servants of our Lord we are diligent and faithful in the discharge of our duties, then the stamp upon our lives bearing Christ's image will have a cancellation mark showing distinguished service. At Judgment Day the supreme mark of approval upon the stamp will be superimposed: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25: 23).

By bearing Christ's image wherever we go in this present life we receive a hundredfold of peace and contentment and temporal blessings, but upon being stamped with the "well done" of the great Judge we shall receive "riches and honor" on the one hand, and "length of days" in which to enjoy them on the other hand. The value of our stamp will be enhanced beyond all computation, for the promise is: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2: 9).

Stamp collectors enjoy trading stamps. But the stamp engraved with the image of our King is a prized possession. No wise stamp collector would think of trading it away under any circumstances. "Buy the truth, and sell it not," is the advice to the seeker after the true treasure, more precious than any collection extant in the world today.

The bearer of this stamp has the assurance that Someone much greater than mortal man guides and directs his steps each day. With His help anything is possible. With

His image enshrined in the heart there is only one thing to fear, that the image may become dimmed and tarnished to the owner until he forgets its value. The stamp is a protection from doubt and worry. The longer he possesses the stamp the more valuable his treasure becomes. No one will ever be able to take it away from him. The only way he can lose it is by neglect.

Great care should be taken that it is not treated as something paltry or worthless. To lay the epistle bearing this stamp aside and eventually forget it means that the good and worth-while things of life are being disregarded, and more and more wrong takes the place of right, until the epistle lies forgotten, as did a certain woman's church letter, which, discolored by age, her son found in an old trunk. Hurrying to his mother he exclaimed, "O Mother, see, I have found your religion in the trunk!" There are many who pack their religion in some trunk, as it were, and their letter bearing the divine stamp becomes ineligible through disuse.

Going beyond the thought of the "stamp" as a mere postal obligation, let us consider it as the mark of authority which must accompany each diplomat on a foreign mission. Ambassadors sent by one sovereign or state to another, either as resident representative or on a special mission, are commissioned by their ruler to act in his behalf. The stamp of authority is upon them. Each of God's ambassadors also has the stamp of authority upon him. Abraham was once called upon to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldees and go into a "place which he should after receive for an inheritance," and so he journeyed, "not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11: 8). Behind him was the authority of God. The Lord met Moses at the burning bush, and placing the stamp of authority upon him sent him to the Pharaoh of Egypt to deliver His people Israel. Nehemiah, bearing letters from King Artaxerxes, journeyed to Jerusalem that he might be in charge of the re-building of the wall of the city, and though his enemies were stubborn and numerous, the undertaking was a noted success because his work was stamped with the approval of God, without which the authority of the King of Persia would have been a poor support.

Paul, as he journeyed to Damascus saw a great light and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" And he, "trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the Lord answered him, "Arise and go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9: 4-6). The voice of authority spoke and Paul was immediately obedient to the heavenly vision. Thus stamped with the authority of Christ he went forth and became the world's greatest missionary, an ambassador for Christ, bearing in his body the owner's stamp of Jesus (Gal. 6: 17, Moffatt).

Jesus referred to Himself as a "certain nobleman going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return" (Luke 19: 12). The stamp of God was upon Him, and before leaving He called His servants to Him and placed His stamp upon them. He left with each certain responsibilities, saying, "Occupy till I come."

Traveling along the highway of life, the humble Christian belongs to the nondescript throng of humanity except

for the possession of this stamp, bearing Christ's image. Unimportant as we may seem, we become emboldened by resolve and strengthened by hope as we see the evidence of the power of the divine stamp upon the lives of such men as Abraham, Moses, Nehemiah, Paul, and upon the lives of the ordinary working men, fishermen, tax gatherers, and the common people who heard Christ gladly. They, too, were indistinguishable from the masses until they met Christ. Stamped with authority from Him these formerly obscure men and women went out and changed the world by their teaching and example, and changed the course of history.

Our beginnings are as theirs. Stamped with the authority of Christ we set out to become living epistles of courage, zeal, right conduct, an aggregate of qualities which distinguishes us from the millions of nameless, faceless individuals now inhabiting the earth.

A king's message bears his great authority. It is said that in years past when the Prime Minister of England would stand at the Bar of the House of Commons and cry, "A message from the King," everything else was held in abeyance and the message took first place in the proceedings. So must it be with the King's message to us. It must have first place because it is of first rank. It has the authority of the King of kings. It is stamped with His divine image, it is a message from Him.

THE GREAT APOSTASY

(Continued from page 7)

mind wrestling with problems which seemed overwhelming, by sleepless nights and days of study, analysis and research, by the single-handed efforts of an honest man groping and praying for the light, accepting it as it came, and the gigantic feat of walking in that light. Not until the light had completely illuminated one individual in doctrine and practice did the Two Witnesses stand upon their feet. Every translation agrees that the 1,260 years did not end until they were standing erect. Phillips states it well:

"After three and a half days the Spirit of Life from God entered them and they stood upright on their feet."

And they stand today—tall, strong, erect,—given life and vitality by loyal men and women who will not suffer true religion to perish in the streets. Furthermore, the Two Witnesses shall continue to stand until the Lord returns from heaven for *truth shall never die*.

Next Issue: APOSTASY TERMINATED

LOVE OF APPLAUSE

(Continued from page 5)

But is it so? Is it necessary, in order to succeed in business, that you should adopt a standard of morals more lax and pliable than the one placed before you in the Bible? Perhaps for a time a rigid adherence to rectitude might bear hard upon you; but how would it be in the end? Possibly your neighbor, by being less scrupulous than yourself, may invent a more expeditious way of acquiring a fortune. If he is willing to violate the dictates

of conscience, to lie, to cheat, and trample on the rules of justice and honesty, he may, indeed, get the start of you, and rise suddenly to wealth and distinction.

But would you envy him his riches, or be willing to place yourself in his situation? Sudden wealth, especially when obtained by dishonest means, rarely fails of bringing with it sudden ruin. Those who acquire it are, of course, beggared in their morals, and are often very soon beggared in their poverty. Their riches are corrupted; and while they bring the curse of God on their immediate possessors, they usually entail ruin and misery upon their families.

If it be admitted, then, that strict integrity is not always the shortest way to success, is it not the surest, the happiest, and the best? A young man of thorough integrity may, it is true, find it difficult, in the midst of dishonest competitors and rivals, to start in his business or profession; but how long ere he will surmount every difficulty, draw around him patrons and friends, and rise in the confidence and support of all who know him.

What if in pursuing this course you should not at the close of life have so much money by a few hundred dollars? Will not a fair character, an approving conscience, and an approving God, be an abundant compensation for this little deficiency of pelf?

Oh, there is an hour coming when one whisper of an approving mind, one smile of an approving God, will be accounted of more value than the wealth of a thousand worlds like this. In that hour, my young friend, nothing will sustain you but the consciousness of having been governed by worthy and good principles.

OBITUARY

MRS. ELIZABETH FEY

On Monday, April 21, 1958, funeral services for Mrs. Elizabeth Fey of West Leyden, N. Y., were conducted at her home, Brother K. E. Flowerday, assistant pastor of the Rochester congregation, officiating.

Mrs. Fey had been acquainted with our work for many years and became a ready listener whenever the beautiful Bible truths were discussed in her presence and considered them a shining light which brightened her declining years, having been blessed to reach the age of 91 years. She had enjoyed the companionship of her daughter, the late Sister Lucy Cogswell, who preceded her in death one year ago, and of her granddaughter, Sister Gladys Urtz, who carries on earnestly alone in her home community.

The deceased leaves to mourn her loss, three sons, Elmer, Victor, and Lester Fey; two daughters, Mrs. Belva Burnett and Mrs. Erna Freeman; sixteen grandchildren and nine great grandchildren, all of whom reside in or near West Leyden.

At such seasons when the shadow of death falls more directly across our path, we the more urgently petition our Father, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

"Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungry neighbor, and me."

Meditations On the Word

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9: 7).

Giving is an action required of the true Christian. None of us can live to himself, each must be willing to share. Those with a plenty of this world's goods must be forward to help the less fortunate. And to be acceptable, this giving must be willingly and cheerfully done. "God loves a cheerful giver." If anything is given grudgingly, under compulsion, the recipient still benefits from the gift, but no credit to the giver can be entered by the recording angel in the Eternal's book of remembrance.

The virtue to the giver is not necessarily indicated by the size of the gift. The poor widow's two mites is a revealing example. The rich were casting into the treasury of their abundance. They did not feel what they gave, and they had much more left after making the gift. The two mites the poor widow cast in was her whole living, it was all that she had. Jesus said of her: "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all" (Luke 21: 3).

Important as this type of giving is, yet it is not the most essential. To be sure there are people who clutch their money so tightly that it pains them to let go even a small amount of it, but on the whole people are quite inclined to be charitable. There are other types of giving, however, and one or more of these could prove problematic to many of us. We may be reluctant to give credit to another for fear of down-grading ourselves. It may irk us to give a word of praise or encouragement to someone else, especially if we feel that our own effort does not receive the recognition it should.

The cheerful giver must be prepared to give up his own idea of right and wrong. There may be nothing that he holds dearer than his own private opinion. Yet to gain salvation it must be surrendered. God's thoughts and ways are superior to man's, as the heaven is higher than the earth, hence our own thoughts must be given up cheerfully. And for good reason, "for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8: 6).

Some people value prestige, to be held in high esteem by other people, as their greatest asset. Some have even given up their life before they would face personal defeat. Perhaps the classical example of this was Ahithophel, King David's counselor. He set his house in order and hanged himself before he would face the fact that he had lost prestige in the king's court. Seeking honor one of another must be given up cheerfully, for Jesus said: "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only" (John 5: 44).

We may be unwilling to give our time to worthy causes. Our daily schedule of activities may not be tied to any economic need or necessity, yet we just don't like to be bothered to have our program for the day or week up-

set. However, the spiritual work must come first. Perhaps someone needs strengthening or encouragement, a sick friend may need visiting, some distraught person in a distant city may need a letter of cheer to lift his spirits. To properly discharge these duties will take time and effort. How we respond to the needs of others will determine whether or not we are a cheerful giver.

There are people who need sympathetic understanding. Do we cheerfully give it, or do we say to ourselves: "That person is a victim of his own folly; much of his trouble is imaginary. If only he would snap himself out of it he would be all right." That may not be the true story, he may need the understanding and encouragement that only a Christian brother can give. To be a cheerful giver we must give it.

The appreciative recipient must also give cheerfully in return. When Jesus sent out His twelve apostles He "gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases." He said to them, "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10: 8). This rule applies today. If we have been blessed with a comprehensive insight into the knowledge of God, we should want to share our good fortune with others. The word of God is "without money and without price." If that precious treasure is in our possession we must be willing to share it with others. This may take time, effort and money, but it must be done, and done willingly and cheerfully.

The cheerful giver must give his or her talents to the work of Christ and His church. One may have musical ability, another can sing. Still another may be able to lead church groups. One can write essays, another do secretarial work. Service in all these offices is gratis, hence one cannot expect to be paid as he goes along only in the satisfaction of having shared his strength with a weaker brother. Paul gives a clear-cut statement on the use of talent in Rom. 12: 6—8 (Moffatt), "Our talents differ with the grace that is given us; if the talent is that of prophecy, let us employ it in proportion to our faith; if it is practical service, let us mind our service; the teacher must mind his teaching, the speaker his words of counsel; the contributor must be liberal, the superintendent must be in earnest, the sick visitor must be cheerful."

All these different types of giving which we have enumerated could be grouped under one general heading, giving *ourselves*. If we have given ourselves wholly to God, nothing will be reserved with which to serve the flesh. The words of the familiar consecration hymn, "Take my life and let it be," seem to depict the attitude perfectly:

"Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.

"Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee;
Take my voice and let me sing always, only for my King.

"Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee;
Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold.

"Take my moments and my days, let them flow in endless praise;
Take my intellect and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

"Take my will and make it Thine, it shall be no longer mine:
Take my heart, it is Thine own, it shall be Thy royal throne.

"Take my love, my God, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for Thee."

Your Questions Answered

BIBLICAL PERSONAL

CURRENT



Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

When is Satan to be cast out of heaven?

When Jesus uttered the words, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," He spoke prophetically. To understand this saying we must first understand whom He is talking about. It is very certain that this Satan is no angel, for the angels of God never die (Luke 20:36), while Satan, we are assured, is marked for eventual destruction in the "lake of fire, . . . which is the second death" (Rev. 20:9, 10, 14; 21:8).

Throughout the Bible Satan or the devil is used as a symbolic or inclusive term, to denote sin and all sinners, any adversary to God. It is employed in surprising ways. Peter was called Satan because he opposed Christ (Matt. 16:23), and so was Judas (John 6:70).

The heaven this Satan occupies is not God's heaven, but the social and political heavens of our troubled *kosmos*. He will fall from it or be cast out when Christ and the 144,000 take over the reins of government and suppress all evil. During the Millennial reign sin and all sinners, that is the devil, or Satan, will be bound, but only at the close of the 1,000-year reign will all evil be eliminated, and then Satan will indeed be cast out.

Are young children and infants held responsible for sins if they die in childhood or infancy?

Inasmuch as young children or infants are not capable of discerning between good and evil they are not responsible for what they have done or not done. They are neither consigned to punishment nor taken to glory. They are not subject to a resurrection and judgment. Parents who have lost little children find this principle hard to accept, but the tender mercy of our heavenly Father permits them dreamless sleep, their being without law (Rom. 2:12).

Salvation is a boon to be earned; it is promised to the overcomers of evil (Rom. 12:21; Rev. 21:7). Knowledge is fundamental (II Peter 1:2, 3). Infants and children, being of tender years and insufficient understanding, are without promise or punishment.

What is the significance of Good Friday? Do you observe it?

Good Friday as observed by the Christian world is the day set aside for the commemoration of the day on which Christ was crucified. It is the Friday before the Easter Sunday, commemorated by the world as the resurrection day of our Lord. The time for the observance of these days was set by the Council of Nice, in the year 325, and do not correspond with the Biblical reckoning of time; crucifixion, Abib, or Nisan, 13; Resurrection, Abib 15. We do not observe the day.

Will you please give the reason why Jesus said of the fig tree, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever" (Mark 11:12-14)?

The obvious reason for this act is that the fig tree was barren and therefore of no use. In the East the tree begins to sprout about the time of the vernal equinox. The fruit appears before the leaves, and the foliage expands about the end of March. Hence, there being leaves upon it, our Lord might confidently expect to find fruit also.

This event occurred on the 11th of the month Nisan,

just four days before the first fruits were to be offered in the temple. The "fig harvest" was not yet come but first fruits could well be expected. And since the tree was barren, Jesus cursed it.

Undoubtedly, Jesus also intended to teach a great moral lesson. As the barren fig tree was cursed, so Israel, because of disobedience, was about to be doomed. So also will it be in the last days; those who do not bear fruit when fruit is expected of them shall be cursed.

Please explain what difference there is in the words "pagan" and "papal." Are either of the words mentioned in the Bible?

The words are not mentioned directly in the King James Version of the Bible, except as referred to prophetically. They are generally used by writers as adjectives with the word "Rome."

Before Rome was Christianized (?) it was pagan. That is, it worshiped all the gods it could think of, and indulged in all sorts of superstitious practices and revelry. As Christianity spread and the Romans were converted to it, and the papal system of rule, that is, governed by the popes, was established, Rome came to be called papal.

Please explain your statement in the MESSAGE (Mar. 15, page 11), "Martin Luther was a bitter foe of good works."

Martin Luther believed so strongly in salvation by faith in the merits of Christ, that is, that Christ's death on the cross atones for the sins of humanity, that he denounced all those who taught that salvation can be obtained through works. Luther said: "He that says the gospel requires works for salvation, I say flat and plain is a liar." Luther even denounced the book of James and wanted to put it out of the Bible because it teaches salvation by good works.

Do you believe in a succession of the apostles, or do you think there were only twelve?

We believe there were only twelve apostles as chosen by our Lord. Paul was chosen by the Lord Himself to succeed Judas, and these twelve have the honor of being the "twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14). After them there were to be no successors.

Those churches which believe in a succession of apostles must account for the lack of harmony among these supposed "apostles." For instance, the Roman Catholic Church teaches a succession of apostles, stating that the popes are apostles. Also, the Mormons elect apostles in their church; twelve in number are maintained. Which apostles of these two church groups are of the Lord? Evidently neither, for one of the main qualifications of an apostle was that he had to see the risen Lord (I Cor. 9:1; 15:8).

Why did John the Baptist say that Jesus was before him? (John 1:15).

John understood Moses and the prophets and therefore knew the prophecies which related to Jesus. He referred to Jesus' being before him by promise. While the nation of Israel was looking for the Messiah, they did not look for John the Baptist, the forerunner.

Revelation 21:3 reads, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men." What men?

The faithful of the 6,000-year day of salvation who are co-rulers with Christ, and the subjects who have worked out their salvation during the Millennium. They are the future inhabitants of the earth, made immortal.

Moses' Decision

Upon a temple's roof at Thebes the young Moses stood
In commune with his dreams . . .
The world was at his feet, but overhead, the stars!
A kingdom at his feet,
Fostered of Pharaoh's daughter,
And a Prince in Egypt:
In statecraft, priestcraft, lifecraft, skilled:
Wise in his youth, and strong, and conscious of his powers:
Dowered with the patience and the passion that are genius:
Ambitious, favored, subtle, sure and swift—
Already Prince in Egypt!
And later, anything he willed.
He mused, and for an infinite moment
All the world streamed by him in a mist:
Cities and ships and nations,
Temples and armies, melted to a mist, and swirling past beneath the stars;
And a faint tumult filled his ears of trumpets and the clash of brazen arms,
The wind and sound of empire,
And he felt the mighty pulse of his own thought and will transmuted to the tread of marching hosts
That shook the granite hills,
And saw chained kings cringe by his chariots lion-drawn,
And felt himself on Pharaoh's throne and crowned with Pharaoh's crown,
And all earth's rhythms beating to his sense of law,

And half earth's purple blood, if so he would, poured out to dye his robes with deeper splendor,

And all the iron delight of power was his; This Egypt was a weapon in his hand, This life was buoyant air, and his the eagle's plume.

For one measureless moment this vision moved and glittered,

Rushing by . . .

Master of men he knew himself; he thrilled; There an empire at his feet, But overhead, a God . . .

Infinite Creator that, as he looked, was of a sudden manifest

In all the burning stars, Relentless, searching spirit, Matchless holiness that smote his dream of carnal, vain pursuit,

Stern divinity piercing to the soul, Silence articulate that turned the universe to one unspoken word, Holy serenity that plucked at his roots of being, And a voice that answered him before he questioned it.

For one eternal instant Moses stood, The cup of empire lifted to his lips, And struggled with the God that is not if we do not surrender soul and body unto Him.

And then descended from the temple roof,

And cast his princely trappings off, And took his slow way through the shadowed town

Unto the quarter where an outcast people and oppressed Labored beneath the last And put their lives and hopes into the bricks because there was no straw,

And cast his lot in with those sickly slaves, To lead them, if he might, from bondage.

—Selected.



